



Statements and Speeches

No. 82/32

CANADA AND LA FRANCOPHONIE

Speech by the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister, to the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, Paris, November 10, 1982.

For over half a century there has been in the minds of men and women of good will among the peoples represented here a noble vision of all the world's francophone countries working together on behalf of peace and the welfare of humanity. They have envisaged a privileged form of co-operation among those groups in the world whose language is French. They have envisaged the formation of closer ties based on and furthered by this bond of language, and guided toward objectives of development and progress.

Fortunately for us, this worthy ambition has been carried beyond the visionary stage. Over the years, men and women of action have arisen and have shared it with a growing number of their contemporaries. Their enthusiasm was first ignited among some professional and scientific groups, after which it spread to the institutions of higher learning and finally to the echelons of parliament and government.

The Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, under whose auspices we are assembled today, is the latest incarnation and one of the essential elements of this same idea, which is now known as La Francophonie internationale.

I readily accepted your invitation because the French language, which is spoken by some six million Canadians almost throughout Canada, is an integral part of Canadian life, and because internationally, the Agency is a major instrument of Canada's francophone policy.

**La
Francophonie
internationale**

I now wish to talk to you about the general theme of La Francophonie internationale — its nature, its mission and its dimensions, about the work that has been started and that which remains to be done. I will then go on to discuss how we Canadians perceive the Agency's role in carrying out this great project that is so near to our hearts.

In the opening session of your first ordinary conference, held in Canada in 1971, I unequivocally stated that La Francophonie was a thing of the future, not of the past. Today my viewpoint has remained unchanged. The pioneers of our great project were motivated not by nostalgia, but by a vision. We would do them a great injustice if we were to dwell on the past, either by condemning it or by wishing we could turn back the clock.

But it would be an even worse injustice if we were to reduce the scope of a project
